Winter 2004

Pacific Islands Fishery News

Newsletter of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

Winter 2004

Science Symposium Presents Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Research

For the first time in over 20 years, the scientific community was brought together for a symposium on recent research conducted in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI). Held November 2-4, 2004 at the Hawaii Convention Center, the Third Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Scientific Symposium provided a forum for scientists to showcase the latest scientific findings about the NWHI.

About 150 attendees participated in the 3 day symposium where the results of over 50 papers were presented on topics including sea turtles, coral reefs, Hawaiian monk seals, seabirds and fisheries. On the second day of the symposium, organizers held a special public and outreach exhibition where scientists shared rare underwater video images taken from deep sea submersibles and "critter cameras" mounted on the backs of Hawaiian monk seals. Nearly 400 people attended the exhibition and there were many opportunities for both adults and children to talk to the researchers and to the test the equipment and gadgets used to gather scientific information.

Research studies to assess NWHI resources were initiated in the late 1970s as part of a Tripartite Cooperative Agreement between the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources, NOAA Fisheries (then known as National Marine Fisheries Service), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The University of Hawaii Sea Grant Program joined shortly after. Following the conclusion of this agreement, two symposia were convened in the early 1980s to exchange results and ideas. Key management products of the first two symposia were fishery management plans for bottomfish, crustaceans and precious corals.

Dr. Richard Grigg, coordinator of the Tripartite research studies and an organizer for all three symposia said "Those [Tripartite] studies have provided managers with the information base to protect and conserve those resources."

Presentations given at the symposium also summarized the history of exploitation of NWHI resources, from the unregulated, industrial scale foreign and domestic fisheries of the early 1900s, to the highly regulated limited-entry fisheries of today.

Recent and current research confirms that the marine resources of the NWHI are as healthy today as they were during the time of the Tripartite research studies.

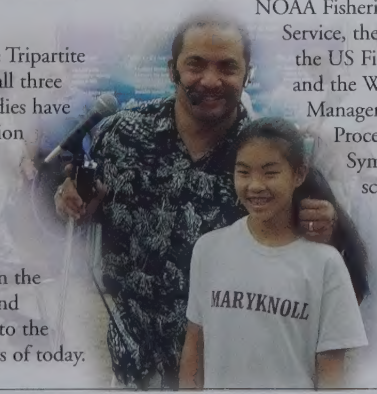
The generally pristine state of the NWHIs coral reefs is not mirrored by the condition of the terrestrial ecosystem. Invasive species (Verbisina spp on Pearl and Hermes, Kure and Midway; ants on Kure and grasshoppers on Necker) have created numerous problems for indigenous populations of plants and ground nesting birds.

Grigg notes that the NWHI are now at a jurisdictional and administrative crossroad. Since the last two symposia, significant changes in the management of the NWHI have led to the development and implementation of discrete research initiatives.

Dr. Gerard DiNardo, co-chair of the symposium organizing committee said the variety of agencies with different management missions and mandates has resulted in fragmented research during the past 10 years. Consequently, a clear and coordinated research plan for ecosystem-based management is lacking.

Symposium organizers assembled an expert panel to address this issue. The panel recommended the reformation of a Tripartite-like agreement among key resource management agencies to develop a five to ten year research plan that would identify ecosystem-based management needs.

The event was organized by the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, NOAA Fisheries, NOAA Ocean Service, the University of Hawaii, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council. Proceedings of the Symposium, including 50 scientific peer reviewed papers, will be published in a special edition of the Smithsonian Institution's *Atoll Research Bulletin* in early 2006.



One-man decompression chamber

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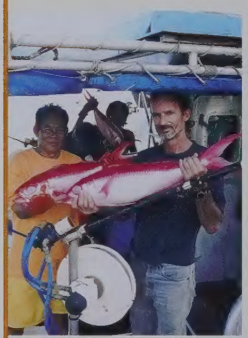
Fishing Regulations for the Proposed NWHI Sanctuary

On December 4, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed an Executive Order (EO) creating a Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, with the purpose of conserving and protecting coral reef ecosystems. Since then, the Reserve- managed by NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS)- has dealt with the challenge of designating the area as a National Marine Sanctuary, a process that will continue through 2005 and 2006.

Fisheries management has been at the center of this challenge. Fishing for bottomfish, coral reef fish, crustaceans, and precious corals has been conducted in the NWHI for many decades. The Council has exercised management authority over these fisheries since 1976. Three studies over a thirty year period show little change in the pristine nature of the NWHI and is a testament to the Council's prudent management of fisheries in this archipelago. While the NWHI coral reef ecosystem is pristine, threats to birds, sea turtles and monk seals include land-based pollution and run-off, vessel groundings, coral bleaching, marine debris, and invasive species.



NWHI Fisher Bobby Gomez with Onaga (/Etelis coruscans)/

The general process for designating a sanctuary is outlined in the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA). The NMSA provides the Council 120 days to prepare draft fishing regulations for the proposed sanctuary. Unfortunately, NOS started the 120 day clock on September 12, 2004 when it gave the Council its proposed goals and objectives for the sanctuary. Thus, the Council has been directed to prepare fishing regulations in a severely truncated time period which does not follow the Council's normal process. Hopefully the Sanctuary program will agree to the Council's request for an extension to allow for an analysis of information and presentation of that analysis to the Council, its advisory bodies – Ecosystem Plan Team, Habitat Advisory Panel, Scientific and Statistical Committee - and the public.

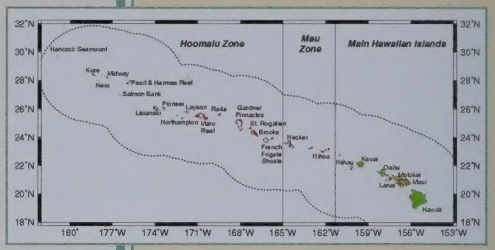
At its 124th meeting held October 13-15, 2004, the Council considered a range of alternatives on how best to manage fisheries in the NWHI. The Council agreed to create a working group of local office staff from the National Marine Sanctuaries Program (NMSP), NOAA Fisheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Hawaii, the Council, and fishermen. The primary task of this group was to develop a shared preferred management regime to serve as a basis for fishing regulations in the proposed NWHI sanctuary.

At a meeting held at the Council's office in Honolulu on October 29, 2004, NOS made it clear that they will not engage in discussions with the Council and others to reach consensus on a preferred alternative because they have already submitted their proposed goals and objectives for the sanctuary. As the meeting failed to produce a shared preferred alternative, the Council has been forced into a difficult position and constrained by an attenuated process. The Council has expressed its concern that the development of fishing regulations in such a short time period will not allow proper analysis and public review

According to NOS, the draft fishery regulations will be analyzed in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to be completed sometime in 2005. The Council preferred to develop its own DEIS on fishing regulations, however, NOAA did not support the development of two separate EISs. The Council develops regulations based on the "best available science", while also looking at the effects of the regulatory regime on the environment, including social and economic factors. Without a DEIS to provide this information, the Council is being forced to make a decision on fishery regulations without proper public review and full understanding of the effects of the regulations on the environment and fishery participants.

Jim Cook, a NWHI Lobster Permit Holder who attended the meeting said, "Nobody around the table seemed to be talking about any science." He also added that "managing the few fishermen in the NWHI is comparable to managing only three cars on all of Oahu". When asked if the process used to designate an area as a Sanctuary Preservation Area was nonscientific, Michael Weiss (Deputy Director, NMSP) replied, "I would not say at all that it is not science-based or that it's wholly subjective."

In order to make an informed decision, the Council will move forward and prepare a comprehensive analysis, as well as conduct public meetings to allow the public to comment on the various management options. The public meetings will be held in January throughout Hawaii. In order to allow time for the preparation and public review of the analysis, the Council has requested an extension of the 120-day time limit through April 4, 2005. The Council will likely choose a preferred management alternative at its 125th Council Meeting, scheduled for March 14-17, 2005 in Honolulu.



Public meetings to address potential fishing regulations for the proposed Northwestern Hawáiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary will be held in Hawaii at the following locations and times:

Maui

Kahului- Monday, January 24, 2005, from 6-9 p.m. at the Maui Beach Hotel, 170 Kaahumanu Ave., Kahului, HI 96732;

Kauai

Lihue-Tuesday, January 25, 2005, from 6-9 p.m. at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School, 4431 Nuhou St., Lihue, HI 96766.

Oahu

Honolulu-Wednesday, January 26, 2005 from 6-9 p.m. at the Ala Moana Hotel, 410 Atkinson Dr., Honolulu, HI 96815;

Big Island

Hilo-Thursday, January 27, 2005, from 6-9 p.m. at the Naniloa Hotel, 93 Banyan Dr., Hilo HI 96720;

Kona-Friday, January 28, 2005, from 6-9 p.m. at King Kamehameha Hotel, 75-5660 Palani Rd., Kona, HI 96740;

Written comments are due by February 18, 2005.

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kitty M. Simonds, 808 522-8220 (voice) or 808 522-8226 (fax), at least five days prior to the meeting date.

Send written comments to the Council Office at: 1164 Bishop St., #1400, Honolulu, HI 96813

A Squid Fishery in Kauai

The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council contracted a study to document small-scale squid fisheries in Hawaii. One of those local fisheries is a small cottage fishery for purpleback flying squid *(Sthenoteuthis oualaniensis)*, off the island of Kauai. It is believed that this fishery was begun by Japanese immigrants soon after WWII, but may have been active before the war. Currently, a small number of regular participants represent a mix of Hawaii's ethnic communities with fishermen of Japanese, Philippine, mixed Portuguese and mixed Hawaiian ancestry. The fishery utilizes small and medium sized trailer boats of around 16 to 22 feet in length that launch mainly from Port Allen or Kikiaola Small Boat Harbor in Kekaha. The primary fishing grounds lie along the south and southwest coast of Kauai close to the launching sites. These areas are effective due to their location in relation to prevailing winds and currents that transport drifting boats along the shore or slightly offshore. Therefore, it appears that harbors used by the fleet are dictated more by their proximity to the better fishing grounds than the reverse.

Purple back flying squid (Sthenoteuthis oualaniensis), (Photo: David Itano)

The fishery is highly seasonal, occurring from April to November in a typical year. As a rule of thumb, fishing occurs during months when migratory humpback whales are NOT found in local waters. The season overlaps with the summer *ika shibi* and *ahi* troll (large yellowfin) season. The small boats that engage in squid jigging also take part in a wide variety of fisheries throughout the year, including trolling for all pelagic species, *ika shibi* fishing, bottomfishing and shallow handlining for akule (Selar cruemenophthalmus), squirrelfish, bonefish and other species.

The Kauai squid fishing grounds are surprisingly close to shore, often only 2 – 4 miles from the southern harbors in water depths of around 500 to 800 fathoms. A typical fishing trip would leave the harbor in the early evening and head southeast to begin a drift upwind and upcurrent from the originating harbor. Vessels normally do not attempt to slow their drift with a sea anchor or parachute drogue as is typical of *ika shibi* tuna handline fishing. A good pace of drift is preferred for fishing the baited steel rods that are trailed out behind the vessel. Apparently, a steady wind on the fishing grounds of 15 – 20 knots or more provides good conditions for this style of fishing.

During recent interviews conducted with Kauai fishermen, directed squid jigging was said to take place primarily from two days after the full moon, through the dark new moon period and cease between the quarter to half moon period. This strategy takes advantage of the maximum period of dark in the early evening hours as most of the fishing takes place from sunset to 10 p.m.

Once a drift is set up, the above water light is activated to attract squid prey and the vessel allowed to drift freely with the wind. On the southeast coast of Kauai, the prevailing trade winds will transport a vessel in a westerly direction, parallel to the shoreline and depth contours. This provides the fisherman a great advantage as he can maintain a near constant depth over productive grounds and be confident that he will not be taken toward the reef or too far out to sea. Once the vessel has drifted south from its launch site, the vessel is repositioned upwind for another long drift.

Chum is not normally used in the fishery as it tends to drift rapidly away from the vessel drawing squid away from the hooking zone. For the same reason, baited handlines for tuna are usually not set unless the trip is primarily a tuna trip and squid is the secondary target.

Vessels are usually manned with two or three fishermen, each equipped with a single baited handline. Hooked squid are hauled quickly to the surface and netted or lifted from the water and stored in 5-gallon buckets or small ice chests. As the night progresses, the fishermen attempt to draw and maintain the squid school closer to the vessel to increase hook rates. Fishing normally takes place during the first half of the evening or may be combined with inshore jigging for *akule* or squirrelfish or move further offshore to fish *ika shibi* tuna gear.

The fishermen interviewed used a very standardized style of gear with little apparent variation. Luminous squid jigs were not generally used. Instead fishermen used bait covered steel rods armed with two rings of barbless hooks set at one end. The fishermen typically make their own rigs by soldering hooks to a short section of stainless steel rod and then wrapped the rod with a thin section of squid, secured in place with a thin wire. Either local purpleback squid or imported California market squid *(Loligo opalescens)* is used, but the local squid is preferred because it is more durable. Typically, several hooks will be prepared prior to a fishing trip and stored chilled or frozen until needed. Most fishermen interviewed prefer to fish these baited rigs with a small wooden handreel filled with light monofilament line.

Baited squid rigs stored in the freezer for a fishing trip (Photo: David Itano)

Submersible, underwater lights are used for *ika shibi* tuna handline fishing. However, Kauai squid fishermen prefer to use a 12-volt, 25-watt above water light to attract the squid or the small fish and crustaceans that attract the squid. The above water lights are believed to be more efficient as they will not tangle fishing lines like a submersible light, and they create a shadowing effect under the hull where the squid often wait to ambush prey. Sometimes only a very small light or no light is used. The last essential piece of gear that is necessary is a round scoop net to land the squid caught on the baited rigs. Wood handled nets with circular hoops of 14 to 18-inch diameter are typical. Squid gaffs can also be used but are not common in the Kauai squid fishery.

The fishermen speak of catches in terms of how many 5-gallon buckets can be filled in an evening. Roughly speaking, two buckets or more is considered good fishing while a half bucket represents a very poor night. In comparison to Hilo catches, the Kauai fishery seems to take smaller sized purpleback squid. As is typical of squid jig fisheries, the Kauai squid fishery is essentially bycatch free. Occasionally, a baited handline is deployed for larger species while drifting for squid, but these catches are considered to be non-target retained catch rather than bycatch.

TWO PROTECTED SPECIES WORKSHOPS HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICE

Workshop on False Killer Whale Populations and Fishery Interactions in the Central Pacific

In June and September 2004, the Council hosted two workshops convened by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on interactions between longline vessels and protected species. The first meetings, the Workshop on False Killer Whale Populations and Fishery Interactions in the Central Pacific, reviewed information on the status of false killer whale populations in the central Pacific Ocean and interactions with Hawaii-based longline vessels in the region. The workshop also covered background information and procedures used to categorize the Hawaii longline fishery under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The purpose of this workshop was to discuss section 118 of MMPA categorization requirements under data poor situations, specifically concerning the population status of false killer whales (Pseudorca crassidens) within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around the Hawaiian Islands.

The impetus for this workshop was litigation brought against (NMFS) for the way it categorized the Hawaii-based longline fishery as Category III under the MMPA. The MMPA has three categories for classifying fisheries, ranging from those that pose the most serious threat of injury and death to marine mammals (Category I) to those that are of negligible risk (Category III). The Hawaii-based longline fishery was previously classed as a Category III fishery, given the very limited number of interactions with marine mammals (< 100 per year), mainly with false killer whales and shortfin pilot whales. Although false killer whales are common cosmopolitan species, found in all tropical and sub-tropical seas, genetic evidence suggests that there may be a limited reproductively isolated population around the Hawaiian Islands.

The small number of false killer whale interactions (10-20 per year) are thought by NMFS to occur at too high a frequency. However, because of gaps in the current data and understanding of false killer whales, this conclusion cannot be supported with any degree of confidence. The workshop was intended to provide a forum for discussions on what data are needed to bring greater precision to estimating the impacts of the Hawaii-based longline fishery on this population. The workshop included presentations from invited experts and a broad-ranging discussion of the scientific information available on marine mammal populations in the central Pacific and interactions with fishing vessels, as well as suggestions for future research. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Samuel G. Pooley (NMFS) in his capacity as Acting Regional Administrator, Pacific Islands Region.

The workshop included discussion of the basic biology of false killer whales, surveys of marine mammal abundance in the Hawaiian Islands, false killer whale genetics, information on the Hawaii longline fishery and estimates of its interactions with false killer whales, the impact of fishery interactions on false killer whales, and related topics. The workshop concluded with a discussion on false killer whale population assessments, including their representativeness; species distribution (range); stock identification; seasonality; the influence of oceanography; the determination of serious injury (post-hooking mortality); and possible approaches to mitigating interactions between false killer whales and fishing gear, particularly longline fishing gear.

Scientists agreed that the evidence for reproductive isolation between the samples from Hawaii and the Eastern Tropical Pacific was very strong. With the available evidence, however, it is not possible to identify the ranges of each stock or to determine possible geographic overlap. One issue of concern was the absence of samples from the Hawaii longline fishery, with almost all Hawaii samples being from near-shore surveys in the main Hawaiian Islands (where longline fishing is prohibited by regulation). Observers in the Hawaii longline fishery are now equipped with biopsy sampling gear to help fill this gap. Observer data from the Hawaii fishery suggests that false killer whales are frequently observed from longline vessels, but they were rarely seen in line transect surveys onboard NOAA research vessels designed to estimate the abundance of marine mammals in the US EEZ. Further, it was clear that false killer whales are commonly sighted in the nearshore waters of the Hawaiian Islands from small boats and light aircraft.

There was general support for the idea of holding a species-specific post-hooking injury and mortality workshop. However, the recommendation of a 1997 workshop on serious injury and mortality of marine mammals that any hooking in the mouth or head was likely to be a "serious" and potentially life-threatening injury was generally, although not totally, accepted by the participants. The recent change to the requirement for using circle hooks in the swordfish fishery might

False Killer Whale off Big Island. Photo courtesy R.W. Baird, Cascadia Research. Taken under NMFS Research Permit No. 731-1509

reduce the problem in that component of the fishery. There was also some discussion of the relatively common practice of leaving an area where interactions occur as a mitigation method. The Hawaii-based longline fleet, as well as other longline fleets around the world, employ this avoidance technique when interactions occur.

Although mitigation was not explicitly an objective of the workshop, advantage was taken of the broad range of knowledge represented by the participants. No immediate suggestions were available for implementation concerning other methods to avoid or mitigate fishing gear interactions with false killer whales in the Hawaii longline fishery. Acoustical shields and irritants, gear and other fishing modifications were discussed. One participant noted that experience with other cetaceans has shown that seemingly "common sense" in deterring interactions frequently turns out to be wrong. Acknowledging the social and learning behavior of false killer whales, and relating avoidance techniques to their own incentive structure, was considered an important principle in designing deterrents.

Despite the workshop highlighting the uncertainties in the data concerning false killer whale interactions with the Hawaii-based longline fishery, NMFS proceeded to elevate the fishery to Category I under the MMPA in August 2004.

Japan-Hawaii Sea Turtle and Seabird Experiment (JHSTSE)

A Council hosted workshop to plan a joint Japan-Hawaii Sea Turtle and Seabird Experiment (JHSTSE) was convened by the Pacific Islands Fisheries Research Center (PIFSC) September 14-16, with participation by scientists, Council staff and representatives from the fishing industry and environmental organizations. The workshop discussed specific details of field experiments to be conducted in 2005 and beyond, using research, commercial longline, and training vessels, to test sea turtle and seabird bycatch reduction techniques. Both Japan and

Hawaii have been involved in such studies for a number of years. Participants reviewed the research on using hook size and bait combinations to minimize sea turtle interactions, a technique that has been successful in US longline fisheries. Participants were particularly interested in the research being conducted by Japanese scientists that looks at a range of sizes for tuna hooks and circle hooks (offset, where the point is at an angle to the shank, and non-offset) used by Japanese longliners. The meeting capitalized on the existing work conducted by both countries and discussed ways to structure future research so that statistically valid comparisons could be made.

Other projects besides hook and bait combinations, that researchers are working on to minimize longline-sea turtle interactions, include deeper longline gear configurations, satellite tracking of released turtles and examination of the feeding behavior of captive turtles. Studies on deep longline gear configurations seek to identify a method by which longliners may fish for swordfish in the daytime, using a deep set style of fishing, similar to tuna longlining, which has low interactions with sea turtles as well as seabirds. Japanese scientists and industry have also investigated a wide range of measures for minimizing interactions between longlines and seabirds, including tori or bird scaring lines, water cannon, light and sound, hook sinking speed, night setting and blue-dyed bait. Japanese scientists concluded that there was no single perfect mitigation technique and that various methods used in combination produced optimal results.

However, the Japanese have not tested side setting longlines, as conducted in the Hawaii-based longline fishery, but expressed interest in testing this method on Japanese longliners. It involves setting the line from the side of the vessel and not from the stern. Experiments on side setting on Hawaii-based longliners, using 60-gram weights and a small bird scaring curtain were found to have almost 100% effectiveness in reducing contacts between seabirds and baited hooks, resulting in no hooked seabirds. Moreover, side setting carries with it operational benefits, in that the fishing gear can both be set and retrieved from the same location on the longline vessel. Most vessels set gear from the stern and retrieve it from the side, necessitating the movement of retrieved gear to the stern in preparation for the next set. For these reasons, several vessels in the Hawaii fleet have already converted to side setting.

As a result of the workshop, the Council played host to a scientist from Japan's National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries who visited Hawaii in November and December 2004 to work with Chris Boggs of the PIFSC. The Council will continue to play a coordinating role with these two agencies in developing and facilitating the joint experimental studies on mitigating turtle and seabird bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries. It is hoped that in the future, other countries such as Korea and Taiwan, may also be involved in this work, and untlimately adopt more environmentally responsible longline fishing methods for their fleets.

FISH FOR SALE!

The new Auction has a spacious chilled bidding area.

Auction Manager, Brooks Takenaka, checks the quality of fish before they are put up for Auction

The United Fishing Agency (UFA) was incorporated in 1952. Its new location at Fisherman's Village on Pier 38, formally opened on August 24, 2004. The Village concentrates fishing and the seafood industry in one area, including the UFA's new auction. Custom built with a larger floor and chilled storage capacity, the new auction is located close to the quays, allowing boats to come alongside and unload directly to the auction, as opposed to the old facility where fish were trucked in.

Nowadays all of the longliners operating out of Hawaii are members of the Hawaii Longline Association and all of them deliver to the auction. Bigeye tuna is the main product, with swordfish as an alternative target species. Virtually all species caught are retained and have economic value. The minimal bycatch is primarily regulatory discards (e.g., shark). Retained fish are iced and sold fresh.

Although the fish auction primarily services the longline fishing industry, it also provides an opportunity for small scale local fishermen, the so called "weekend warriors" to offset their operating costs by selling some fish.

The auction system is based on centuries old traditional Japanese auctioning practices and has a strong local market. Each year 18 to 20 million pounds of fish pass through the auction. Approximately 60% of the landings are retained and utilized in Hawaii. The remaining 40% are exported to the US mainland, Japan and Europe. The local high demand is a consequence of a discerning multi-cultural consumer base with traditions of frequent seafood consumption.

This is a fresh display auction, which concentrates market forces on a daily fish supply. The bidding is open and competitive, with bidders representing seafood wholesalers and retailers, restaurants and private buyers. Large parties are a characteristic of Hawaii's social scene, and fresh fish is an expected feature of such parties. Where better to purchase quality fish than the auction? Indeed anyone can bid for fish at the auction. It opens at 05:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday. Fish are auctioned in the following sequence: longline, pole & line, troll caught and bottomfish.

The auction has a pivotal role as single first receiver in a highly centralized marketing system. A variety of fish pass over the block, including bigeye; yellowfin; skipjack and albacore tuna; swordfish; mahimahi; marlin; opah; shark; plus deepwater snappers, jacks and groupers from bottomfishing vessels.

The auction unloads, inspects, displays and auctions the fish on behalf of the fishermen. The auction does not take possession of the catch, but provides a marketing service to promote the best possible quality, presentation and price. To ensure good quality, which is the main feature of the auction, fishermen's paperwork is reviewed, fish temperatures are checked, and the fish are inspected for decomposition. Poor quality fish are rejected at the dock or auction before being put on the auction block.

Auction revenue is commission-based, thereby linking economic incentives for fishermen and the auction house. This incentive based system rewards fishermen who employ good fish handling practices, which result in higher quality fish and higher prices. Fishermen also greatly appreciate the fact that checks are cut for them on the same day as the sale.

Keiki catching a papio

Kewalo Keiki Fishing Conservancy Partners with HDAR and Council

Scott Furushima had an idea: to provide urban children with the opportunity to experience pole and line fishing in an urban environment. "Kids living in Honolulu's urban environment don't have the opportunity to experience fishing like we did," he said. Providing a conservation-based fishing experience for keiki is the reason why Kewalo Keiki Fishing Conservancy (KKFC) supports a tag and release program. Furushima, himself, has tagged and released over 2,000 papio as part of the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources (HDAR) Ulua and Papio Tagging Program. Over 500 of these tagged fish have been recovered all over the island, including Barber's Point, Kahala Beach, Makapuu, Waimanalo, Lanikai, Kaneohe Bay, Kahuku and Haleiwa.

The Council's stock assessment expert panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee recognized the HDAR tagging program as a valuable resource that can be used to aid in assessment of coral reef fish species. KKFC will assist HDAR with trial programs to determine the most appropriate and effective tag type, tag application location, ease of application, overall tag retention and ability to survive tagging stress of coral reef species to include bonefish, goatfish, barracuda, awaawa and other species.

The KKFC catch-tag-and-release project will teach fishing techniques, marine stewardship and conservation. The project site is at Kewalo Basin, 115 Ahui Street, Honolulu, Hawaii. Hands-on educational opportunities are provided for children and Kupuna through KKFC's partnership with other community and government organizations such as: Charter Schools, Partners in Development, the Tutu and Me Program, the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Boy Scouts of America.

Furushima would like to develop the area to accommodate groups, families and organizations for excursions, meetings, gatherings and recreation. Future plans include historical exhibits about Kewalo Basin, a historical exhibit about the changing fishery in Honolulu, and an exhibit about the Aku industry in Hawaii.

Left: Scott Furushima shows keiki how to measure a papio before tagging it for the State's Ulua tagging program. Middle: Tagging a papio. Right: Releasing a tagged papio.

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NEW PLAN FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

More than 100 people participated in the Fishers Forum and workshops held during the 124th Council meeting, October 13-15, 2004, at the Pagoda Hotel in Honolulu. Fishery scientists and managers from the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Western Pacific Fishery Council received feedback on the draft *Strategic Plan for the Conservation and Management of Living Marine Resources in the Pacific Islands Region.* Targeted workshops were held with environmental organizations, commercial fishers and fishery management agencies to solicit input in anticipation of finalizing the plan by May 2005.

Participants were specifically asked to comment on the draft plan's vision statement, goals and objectives. The development of a coordinated plan was supported by all. Participants in particular called for the need for better coordination between government agencies and increased outreach and opportunities to enhance public participation in the fisheries management process. Other important points made were the need for increased resources for non-Hawaii fisheries within the Western Pacific Region, as well as greater focus on the management of international fisheries.

The plan will guide the joint activities of the Council, and the National Marine Fisheries Service's Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) and Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) through 2010 in support of the new Pacific Islands Region, established by NOAA in 2003. A summary of the draft plan is available on the Council's website or go to www.wpcouncil.org to down load the document, or contact the Council to have a copy mailed to you. Additional comments are welcome through January 2005. Public participation makes the fisheries management process work!

From left to right: Bill Robinson (Regional Administrator PIRO), Roy Morioka (Council Chair), Kitty Simonds (Council Executive Director), Sean Martin (Council Member), Conrad Lautenbacher (NOAA Administrator), Peter Young (Director DLNR), Frank Farm (Council Member), Jim Cook (HLA) and Sam Pooley (Director PIFSC).

Available Now – Grants for Native Communities

The Western Pacific Community Demonstration Project Program (CDPP) provides grants to native communities to demonstrate traditional and customary practices in fishing, fishery management and conservation. $500,000 is available each funding cycle for 3 – 5 community projects in the region to qualified applicants. The program provides an opportunity for native communities to develop the capacity to participate in fisheries in the Council's jurisdiction and to avail themselves of Federal funding opportunities while building their social capital.

In 2005, community meetings will be held in CNMI at 8:00 a.m. January 10, in Guam at 6:00 p.m. January 13, and in American Samoa at 6:30 p.m. February 2. CDPP workshops will be held in CNMI at 12:00 p.m. January 10, in Guam at 8:00 a.m. January 14 and in American Samoa at 6:00 p.m. February 3.

The next solicitation for the Western Pacific Community Demonstration Project Program is scheduled to open January 1, 2005 and close February 28, 2005. Each proposal for funding must address at least one of the five funding priorities the Council developed for this solicitation.

Applications must be received at the Pacific Islands Regional Office by the close of business February 28, 2005. Eligibility requirements for the program were published in the Federal Register on April 16, 2002 (67 FR 18512 and 18513). The requirements for this solicitation was published in the Federal Register / Vol. 69, No. 165 / Thursday, August 26, 2004. The FR notices and the full text of the funding opportunity announcement for this program can be accessed via the Council's website: *http://wpcouncil.org/* or contact the Council to receive a mailed copy.

Awardee Kelii Mawae with the boat for the Molokai Aku Fishing Training Project

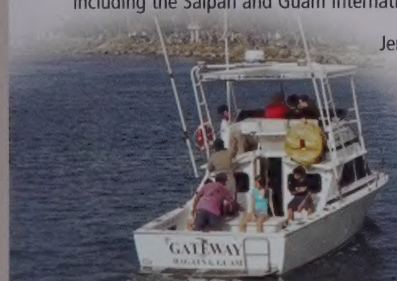
Mike Lee of the Ewa Beach Limu project speaking to Campbell High School students about cultural protocols for Ewa. Following Council participation in this project the community has applied for funding under CDPP.

2003-2004 Community Demonstration Project Advisory Panel; *Back row:* Junior Kanuha, Victoriano April, Sam Mageo, Judith Amesbury, Sabrina Mariner; *Front row:* Mike Flemming, Henry Pelekai, Stan Taisacan

In Memoriam – Jerry Cruz Perez

August 30, 1950 – October 18, 2004

With great sadness the Council marks the passing of Jerry Cruz Perez, an active member of the Pacific fishing community. A fisherman for more than 30 years, Jerry enjoyed bottom-fishing and trolling with friends on his boat Gateway. He was an annual participant in regional fishing competitions, including the Saipan and Guam International Fishing Derbies.



Jerry served the Council as a Commercial Advisory Panel member for many years and was expected to continue that service with a new term in January. Jerry also served on the Board of Directors of the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association.

Council members past and present remember Jerry for his exceptional hospitality and warm welcome on their visits to Guam.

Council Funding Priorities

Each proposal for funding must address at least one of the funding priorities for this solicitation. The five funding priorities identified by the Council for this solicitation are:

1 **Community Education** – Projects that promote economic growth and stability in indigenous communities, through fisheries and conservation-related educational activities that increase skills and knowledge supporting island traditions and principles of self sufficiency and empower communities to better accommodate such traditional practices and principles in their plans for sustaining their future cultural and economic well-being.

2 **Processing of fishery products and byproducts** – Projects that encourage the continuation of traditional island practices through value-added activities designed to eliminate waste, and discards of fisheries bycatch.

3 **Feasibility studies for participation in fishery and fishery related activities** – Projects that improve western Pacific community-based fishing opportunities through research and the study of traditional practices that may be beneficial to the economic, social and cultural good of island communities, including but not limited to community training and vocational education in fish harvesting, storage, processing, distribution and marketing.

4 **Increase opportunities for participation in the Council activities and process** – Projects that broaden the involvement of western Pacific communities in fisheries conservation and management activities and processes that empower such parties to more effectively participate in future decisions over the allocation of the regional fisheries resource.

5 **Demonstrate traditional, cultural fishing practices** – Projects that study the feasibility of using contemporary materials, equipment, and techniques in ways consistent with the historical practices of native Pacific island cultures.

COUNCIL CALENDAR 2005

***JANUARY**

10–13 Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting
Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort
Laurel.Bryant@noaa.gov

16–22 25th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation
Savannah, Georgia
www.seaturtle.org/symposium/

18–20 Coral Reef Ecosystem Plan Team Meeting
Council Office
Jarad.Makaiau@noaa.gov

FEBRUARY

5–11 5th Annual Sanctuary Advisory Council Chair and Coordinator's Meeting
Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Office, San Francisco
farallones@noaa.gov

16–18 National Essential Fish Habitat Coordinator's Meeting
Boulder, Colorado

22–24 88th SSC Meeting
Council Office
Paul.Dalzell@noaa.gov

Feb. 28 to Mar. 1 Baysian Belief Network, Marine Turtle Fibropapilloma Workshop
Council Office
Irene.Kinan@noaa.gov

MARCH

1–2 US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting
Washington D.C.
www.coralreef.gov

2–4 Loggerhead Sea Turtle Workshop
Council Office
Irene.Kinan@noaa.gov

3 Turtle Advisory Committee Meeting
Council Office
Irene.Kinan@noaa.gov

7–11 FAO Committee on Fisheries
Rome, Italy
Benedict.Satia@fao.org

14–17 125th Council Meeting
Ala Moana Hotel
Mark.Mitsuyasu@noaa.gov

24–26 Managing Our Nations Fisheries Conference II
Omni-Shoreham Hotel and Conference Center
Washington, DC
Chris.Oliver@noaa.gov

APRIL

5–8 SPC/WPRFMC Coastal Fisheries Management Workshop
TBD
UetaF@spc.int
Charles.Kaaiai@noaa.gov

11–15 (tentative) Ecosystem Management Planning Workshop
Council Office
Jarad.Makaiau@noaa.gov

14 Precious Corals Plan Team Meeting
Council Office
Joshua.DeMello@noaa.gov

19–21 Coral Reef Ecosystems Plan Team Meeting
Council Office
Jarad.Makaiau@noaa.gov

26 –28 Bottomfish Plan Team Meeting
Council Office
Mark.Mitsuyasu@noaa.gov

26–28 Annual Council Chairs / Executive Directors Meeting
Dana Point, California
Donald.McIsaac@noaa.gov

MAY

3–5 Pelagics Plan Team Meeting
Council Office
Paul.Dalzell@noaa.gov

12 Crustaceans Plan Team Meeting
Council Office
Joshua.DeMello@noaa.gov

17–19 89th SSC Meeting
Council Office
Paul.Dalzell@noaa.gov

23–25 (tentative) 56th Tuna Conference
Lake Arrowhead, CA
Kevin T. Hill
Phone: (858) 546-7170

JUNE

6–9 126th Council Meeting
TBD
Mark.Mitsuyasu@noaa.gov

* NWHI Fishery Management Public Meetings see sidebar page 2

Recipe Skipjack Fish Burgers (Serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

1lb ground skipjack
1/2 small onion (chopped)
1/2 cup bread Crumbs
1/2 cup mushrooms (chopped)
1 egg
1 teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce
Salt and pepper to taste
Oil for frying

Optional: for a crunchy variant add chopped water chestnuts

PREPARATION

Sauté onions and mushrooms in a little oil. Remove from the heat. In a bowl combine all the ingredients, and form into patties. Pan fry for approximately 4 minutes, being careful not to overcook. Serve in a hamburger bun or with rice.

Recipe courtesy of Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association

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